

# South Pierce Fire & Rescue #17



*2008 Annual Report*

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## *MISSION STATEMENT*

"It is the mission of South Pierce Fire and Rescue to preserve life and property, promote public safety, and foster economic growth through leadership."

## *FOCUS*

"The Department will focus its efforts on responding rapidly to emergencies, providing appropriate intervention and community education."

## *CORE VALUES*

### **To Residents:**

We owe the residents of South Pierce Fire and Rescue the highest quality of service possible, characterized by responsiveness, integrity, and professionalism. We will continually strive for quality improvement.

### **To Fire Department:**

We owe the Fire District our full commitment and dedication. We will always look beyond the traditional scope of our individual positions to promote teamwork and organizational effectiveness.

### **To Each Other:**

We owe each other a working environment characterized by trust and respect for the individual, fostering open and honest communication at all levels.

### **To Ourselves:**

We owe ourselves personal and professional growth. We will seek new knowledge and greater challenges, and strive to remain at the leading edge of our profession. We will develop a system for minimizing the impact of disasters and other emergencies on life and property.

***HONOR, INTEGRITY, AND PRIDE***  
***IN ALL WE DO***

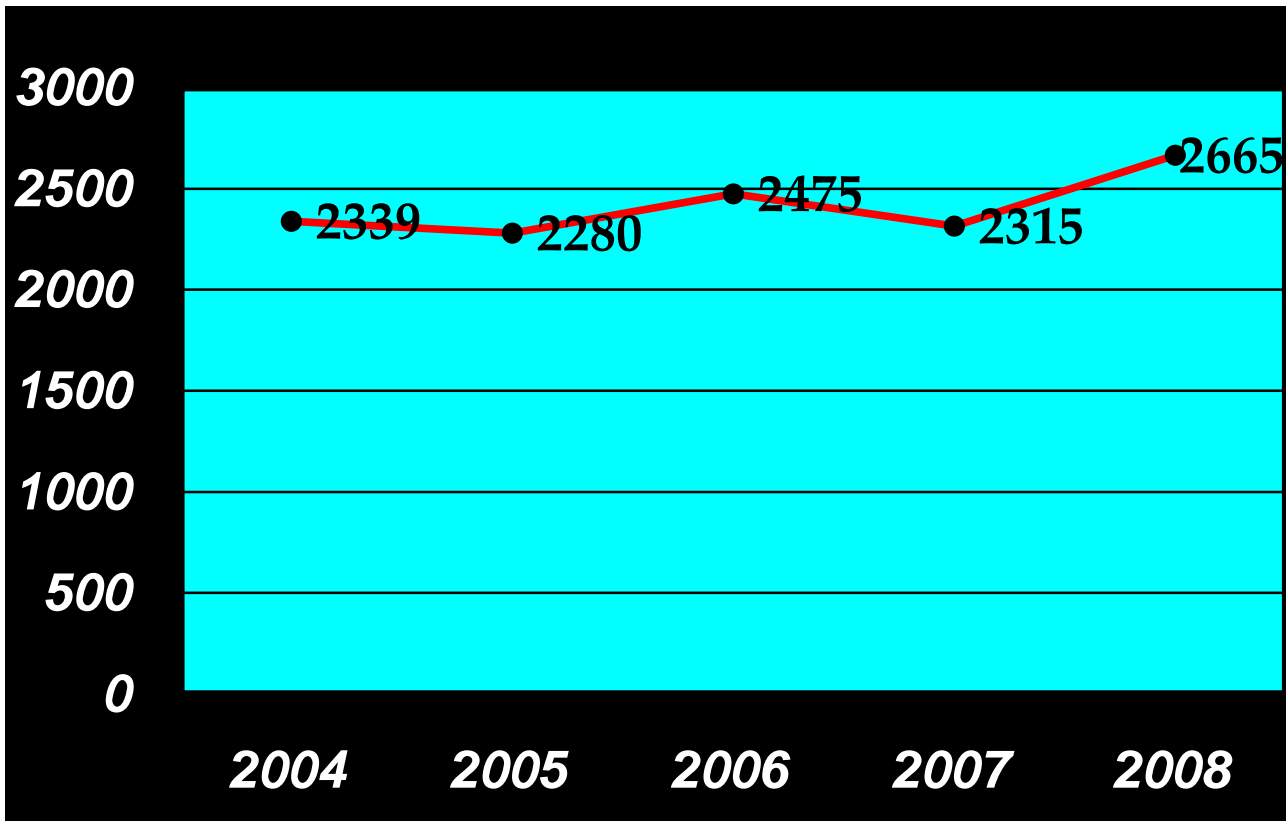


# *District Facts*

## *(2008)*

District Size:	138 square miles
Number of Stations:	7
Total Calls:	2665
Fire	81
EMS	2112
Other	472
Career Personnel:	26
Volunteers:	35
Resident Volunteers:	2
Cadets:	18
Support Services:	11
Number of Citizens:	21,433
Assessed Valuation:	\$1,898,284,000

## *South Pierce Call Volume*



# *District Budget*

## **Revenue**

Taxes	\$3,363,951
Transport Services	\$478,200
Misc. Revenue	\$48,770
<u>Taxes to Reserve Budget</u>	<u>\$353,300</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,244,221</b>

## **Expenses**

Wages and Benefits	\$2,298,628
Equipment	\$720,600
EMS	\$738,896
<u>Communication</u>	<u>\$132,797</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,890,921</b>

\*\* The District identified the need to increase the Reserve Budget to a two (2) month safety net balance of \$600,000.\*\*

# *Administrative*

- Successfully completed a County Boundary Review in order to finalize the South Pierce Merger.
- Assembled a Citizens Advisory Committee to help identify district priorities.
- Adopted new Outdoor Burning Regulations to comply with Puget Sound Clean Air's new and stricter standards.
- Purchases a Ganser Bar Accounting, Budget and Payroll Systems program. This program allowed the District to begin processing payroll in-house January 2009, providing a 50% cost savings over our previous payroll system.
- Consolidated numerous vendors allowing the newly merged district quantity and volume discounts.
- Signed two year contracts with Administrative Secretaries, eliminating yearly contract negotiations.
- Established a Record Retention Storage and pull schedule.
- Consolidated Board of Commissioners meetings.
- Consolidated District 15 and District 17 administrative office staff and divided workload.

## *A Year In Review* *"Progress and Change"*

*By: Fire Chief Bob Vellias*

As the new year approaches, it is time to look back on our year at South Pierce Fire and Rescue. Many progressive and positive changes occurred during our busy year:

**Call volume:** Through the end of 2008, South Pierce Fire and Rescue responded to 2665 emergency calls. This total represented an increase of 249 calls over last year. Most of our increases were medical aid along with a sharp increase in motor vehicle accidents. The rise in fuel prices put many novice riders aboard motorcycles. Calls involving motorcycle accidents increased by 50% this year. If considering moving from a 4-wheel to a 2-wheel mode of transportation, please take the required training classes offered by the Washington State Patrol.

**Merger:** Voters August unanimously (82% yes) approved the merger of Pierce County Fire District 17 and South Pierce Fire District 15. Combining the staff and resources of both districts with create and build a stronger department for citizens of South Pierce County. This year we have recognized the need for more consistent staffing of firefighters and paramedics to meet the emergency needs of our citizens. Consistent service resulted in a mutual aid agreement to extend our membership transport program with Graham Fire and Rescue. Citizens of our District now have the benefit of no "out of pocket" expenses incurred for emergency transport services that are provided by South Pierce Fire or Graham Fire and Rescue.

**Staffing:** Three full time paramedics and one firefighter/EMT were hired this year. Increased staffing provides three (3) paramedics on shift to answer calls most days. The district added fourteen (14) new volunteers this year to our ranks. South Pierce Fire has a total of thirty-four (34) volunteers providing invaluable service to our citizens.

**Equipment:** South Pierce Fire and Rescue was awarded a \$498,000 grant from FEMA to purchase two new engine/tenders. The engine/tenders will replace 25+ year old tenders currently in service. The district expects delivery of our new equipment in early February 2009.

The District received two F350 HD pickups from the Department of Natural Resources to outfit into brush trucks. In addition, the District secured a \$10,000 grant from DNR to help purchase a new 250 gallon slip in tank and pump. The refurbished brush trucks were put into service in June of this year.

In early December, the District received word from FEMA of a \$309,000 grant award to upgrade four (4) District 17 fire stations with exhaust removal system and monies to purchase new communication equipment.

The grants, totaling over \$800,000 this year, will purchase essential equipment for the District without passing on the costs directly to our citizens.

**Enhanced Programs:** The District added the following life and safety programs this year:

- Driveway/Resident Marking Program – Citizens can request a reflective driveway marker to help assist in locating place of residence. For more information contact the District at (253)843-4333.
- Surface Water Rescue Team – The District is developing a Surface Water Rescue Team that can be deployed to calls needing emergency water rescue.
- Fire Cadet Program Accreditation – Our thriving Fire Cadet Program received Bethel School District accreditation for all active members of our cadet program. Each cadet will receive one (1) high school credit for each year they attend the cadet program.

As the new year begins, our newly formed district will continue to work toward providing the best possible service to our citizens of South Pierce County. It has been a great year watching the growth of two districts into one. I look forward to the upcoming challenges and opportunities in 2009.

## *Assistant Chief*

### *2008 Year End Annual Report*

*By: AC Samuel Yount and AC Larry Spohn*

#### **EMS**

##### **ALS licensure for District 15 was obtained and continued.**

Prior to this date, District 15 was on a variance from the County. This was a temporary and yearly renewed process. By becoming licensed, it allows for a permanent status as an ALS agency.

##### **Several members were sent to local and national training.**

By sending the employees to a local or national conference, it allows them to bring back knowledge from national speakers and the state of EMS. It has great validity to keep South Pierce Fire and Rescue current and fresh.

##### **A standardization committee was created.**

This committee ensures that any medic unit that is entered looks the same. The difficulty given is the fact that our apparatus differs in age and style. An outstanding job has been done getting this task accomplished.

##### **The district was represented at both County and State EMS meetings.**

In 2008, AC Yount was appointed to several committees, keeping SPFR updated on current issues.

##### **Several certification classes for paramedics were hosted by the District, welcoming outside agencies to attend.**

The paramedics require classes for recertification. Advanced Cardiac classes, Trauma classes, and Pediatric classes were offered. These classes were well attended by both our personnel and surrounding agencies.

##### **An ambulance search for a new medic unit was conducted.**

Our medic units are due for replacement. McCoy Miller, Wheel Coach, Medtech, and Braun were all researched for obtain the best ambulance for our money. After deliberation, Braun was chosen. Braun has built all of the ambulances for both departments. We are confident that we will receive the best ambulance available.

**Three (3) full-time paramedics were hired.**

In order to bring our staffing up to a more proficient level, by having two paramedics on at each station, three paramedics were needed for hire. This has allowed for better coverage throughout the District. The hiring process continued over a 60-day period. Each candidate took a general knowledge written test, a paramedic test, an assessment test, and a Chiefs Interview. Medical Service Officers and paramedics all over the county were brought in for this testing process.

**We inventoried all EMS equipment.**

In order to complete the merger, all medical supplies were inventoried and later move to station 171 for better controls.

*Communications:*

**The District was awarded a communications grant to purchase new radios for 2009.**

Thanks to Lt. Kathy Kadow, who submitted a grant application, we received monies to purchase radios for all apparatus, providing outstanding quality.

**District 15 and District 17 were both moved to Frequency 3 for better operations.**

Early in the year, District 15 and District 17 were on two separate frequencies. This made it difficult to have good quality communication and interoperability on calls. Fire Communications transferred District 15 to frequency 3, which District 17 was established with.

**Relations with Twin Firs ham radio group was fostered for disaster usage.**

The District recognized our lack of resources in disaster communications. Twin Firs ham radio group has several amateur radio operators that have well organized communication capabilities that supersede the fire department's communication. Currently, we have approximately ten (10) of our own members that have become amateur radio operators to assist the District.

*Information Technology (IT):*

In late 2007 to early 2008, the District began the process of separating from Central Pierce and becoming independent by creating our own IT division. IT was not being adequately provided for our district's needs in bringing District 15

and District 17 together. With the assistance of Vision Computing, we were able to complete the separation process and move forward with our merging districts independent IT division.

*New phone systems were researched in hopes of purchase for the 2009-2010 year.* Obtaining a new phone system would benefit both communications and IT. The phone system the District will need to go to is a voice over IP phone. This would allow all stations to be connected via internet on the phone. The cost for this communication issue is approximately \$15,000.

*All computers were brought to standards.*

Many of the computers were in need of replacement. Today's computers need to be replaced/updated every other year just to be able to run the programs that are necessary in the fire service today. Some of the computers that were replaced were greater than six (6) years old.

*A schedule program was purchased.*

As a growing agency, we were in desperate need of a tracking system for both career and volunteer personnel. The system needed to be accessed at home so they could request shift sign up, vacation, Kelly days, sick time, and trades. The District was able to find a company that met our needs. We use EMS manager that is all web based for better access.

*The District purchased a new pre-fire program and hosts it in the network.*

District 15 and District 17 were behind on our pre-fires and were also being conducted differently. There was a need to standardize and modernize our system. With the help of our IT provider, we were able to find the program and begin using it for all commercial buildings in both districts.

*All stations are now equipped with computers and internet service.*

Nearly half our stations were without computers or internet service. The District was able to provide all stations with computers that have internet service, allowing for better communication.

### *Training Division:*

The Training Division is responsible for assessing training needs of an ever changing department atmosphere, developing a training calendar and training curriculum every quarter for the volunteers and career personnel, providing

instruction and record retention. It also provides and oversees certifications and evaluations of probationary personnel and career based training drills.

2008 has been a very busy year for South Pierce Fire & Rescue 17 Training Division. The Training Division continues to be challenged by a lack of adequate space for classroom as well as hands on, practical application drills. Utilizing the Pierce County Sheriff's office classroom at the Firing Range has been extremely helpful, but we still, on occasion, have outgrown the capacity of our ever-increasing personnel. The Training Division is currently working on numerous locations and/or projects to allow us dedicated space for multiple hose/engine evolutions.

The constantly increasing call volume has taxed our career personnel and heir quarterly training prospects as well. Fortunately, we are at a staffing level currently that allows us to have one shift cover for the other so they may complete their training.

*Accomplishments for 2008 are:*

- Finalize and coordinate programs for special operations programs, such as Low Angle Rescue Teams and Surface Water Rescue Teams, with the hope of expanding these in the future.
- Instituting and implementing a Fire Officer Development Program with the promise of having 10-12 of our personnel obtaining a certification in Fire Officer 1 and the end of September.
- Conducting a testing process to provide four (4) new career firefighters, which produced eight of the ten final candidates coming from our own volunteer ranks and three of the top four chosen to move on to the Academy at North Bend, being our personnel.
- We graduated seven personnel from a volunteer academy with an IFSAC Firefighter 1 certification and placed them on a shift to enhance the career firefighters.
- Through the Fire Officer Program, ten personnel have received nationally recognized certifications in Haz-Mat Operations, Incident Safety Officer, Leadership 1, IFSAC Firefighter 2, and Fire Instructor 1.
- Established, purchased equipment, and certified personnel for a Surface Water Rescue Team.
- Established, purchased equipment, and certified personnel for a Rope Rescue Operations Team.

### *Volunteer/Resident Program:*

There has been a shift, nationwide as well as locally, in the type of volunteer applicants that we receive. For fewer traditional volunteers (personnel living within the departments boundaries) have come forth to serve. A larger number of applications are from individuals seeking a career in the fire service and that number is further reduced by the sheer number of training hours and commitment requirements imposed upon them. Firefighting requires 310 hours of schooling plus an additional 140 hours for EMT certification, which South Pierce Fire & Rescue require each volunteer firefighter to have in their possession within the first year of their association with us.

By the end of 2008, thirty-nine people volunteered their time and energy to serve in a firefighter and/or Support Services capacity with South Pierce Fire & Rescue 17. They have collectively spent over 5000 hours of training.

In a typical month, the volunteers will enhance the career staffing by serving as a portion of the minimum staffing, which totals four shifts individually or a combined 1440 hours a month.

Within the boundaries of South Pierce Fire & Rescue, there are seven stations. Two of the stations are staffed with a combination of career and volunteer personnel. The other five stations are volunteer-manned and two of those five are Resident stations (volunteers actually reside at the stations).

In the past few years, nine volunteers have become career firefighters. Six are currently employed by South Pierce and three have been hired by other local departments.

### *Maintenance Division:*

The Maintenance Division is responsible for the assessing, scheduling maintenance needs, and maintaining the records of the department's ten fire engines, five medical apparatus, two water tenders, three brush units, and five support vehicles. The responsibility of developing, determining specifications for new vehicles and placement of vehicles also falls under the responsibility of the Maintenance Division.

In 2008, the department started the process of ordering two 2009 Engine/Tenders through a federal grant process, spearheaded by Lt. Terry Brown and Lt. Eric

Skogen, at a cost of almost \$900,000. The purchase of these two engines enables the department to have available, on the first apparatus at the scene of a fire, 2500 gallons of water. These purchases also allowed the department to surplus off a number of our vehicles that are well past the twenty year old mark, leaving only three vehicles (one of which and been taken off the response list and designed as a training engine) older than twenty years.

In 2008, preparations were started to replace one of the departments medical transport units with a new one in 2009 at a cost of approximately \$150,000. Another unit is scheduled to pre retrofitted and updated within the year at a cost of \$90,000.

# 2009 GOALS

- ***Building stations:*** With the current economic downturn, it will be difficult for the district to support new building proposals until a thorough citizen education process is developed and completed. It will be important for the district to gather data that will support the need and locations for future stations and update viable current stations. The 2009 budgets earmark \$30,000 to research and produce data that will guide the district towards a comprehensive building plan.
- ***Officer training:*** A seven (7) hour course, in-house curriculum, has been designed for all district officers to attend next year. This course will certify all attendee an IFSAC Fire Officer 2 certification upon its completion.
- ***In-house vehicle maintenance program:*** Chief Vellias will work with District 21 to work towards a potential agreement to support the second hire of their current vehicle maintenance program. Discussions with Chief Baskett indicated their newly formed maintenance person has only been about to handle emergency vehicle repair and has been unable to work on a preventative maintenance plan.
- ***Identify/contact every citizen:*** The district will track all citizen responses next year and continue to enhance public education programs.
- ***Coordinate a recycling center for natural vegetation:*** A chief officer will work with the county agencies to discuss the feasibility of creating waste disposal sites throughout the district for citizens to utilize.
- ***Military recognition:*** All events moving forward will recognize military personnel with acknowledgement and even discounts.
- ***Hire a deputy chief***
- ***Portable water locations:*** Citizen advisory committee suggested the district support portable water locations for our citizens. A chief officer

will research the costs and requirements needed through the appropriate county agencies.

- ***Teenager and young adult education programs:*** Support programs that educate teenagers and young adults. Citizen advisory committee indicated this age group is often overlooked by the fire service.
- ***Hold a yearly open house:*** Citizen advisory committee suggested that the district hold an annual open house in early September to coordinate with the opening of local school districts.